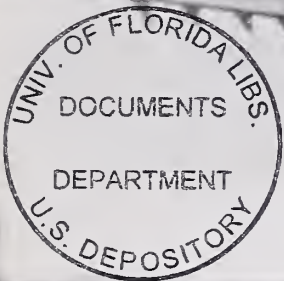


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Profile

March 1981

MAR 6 1981



Air Force's
aerial refueling
specialist
page 12

Memo to readers

Undecided as to your future following high school graduation? College or military service?

Students desiring a college education at a top-flight institution and subsequently military service as a commissioned officer should consider attendance at one of the nation's service academies.

High school juniors who are considering submitting an application for entrance to a service academy should begin **now** to ensure consideration.

Candidates for the Military, Naval and Air Force Academies must have a nomination in order to be considered for appointment. Most candidates receive nominations from members of the U.S. Congress, although nominations are available from other sources. The spring of the high school junior year is the recommended time to apply for congressional nominations; it is not necessary to know the congressional member personally. Prospective candidates should also request a pre-candidate questionnaire from the service academy at the time they apply for nomination so that an admissions file may be initiated. Questions should be referred to the respective academies' admission office.

Appointments to the Coast Guard Academy are made competitively on a nationwide basis. A nomination is not required. Qualified men and women may apply by writing to Director of Admissions, U.S. Coast Guard Academy, New London, Conn. 06320.

Admission to any of the academies requires that the applicant be at least 17 years of age (but not have passed the 22nd birthday by July 1 of the year of entrance), a citizen of the United States, of good moral character and able to meet academic, physical and medical requirements. Applicants must not be married or have dependents.

The overall academic and physical preparation of a candidate is of vital importance to success at any of the academies. In high school the student should strive for above average grades and participate in athletic programs, clubs and extracurricular activities.

A candidate's academic qualification for admission is determined by results on the College Board Admissions Testing Program's Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) or the American College Testing (ACT) program, plus a review of scholastic records.

Candidates are scheduled for a medical examination following evaluation of academic qualifications. All medical examinations are scheduled by the Department of Defense Medical Examination Review Board, U.S. Air Force Academy, Colo. 80840.

All service academies offer four years of college education leading to a bachelor of science degree. Cadets and midshipmen receive a monthly allowance, plus tuition, medical care and room and board. Upon graduation, commissions are conferred for an active duty period of at least five years; however, Air Force Academy graduates who attend undergraduate pilot training after commissioning have a seven-year service commitment.

For students wanting a college education and at the same time a military career, the service academies are an excellent opportunity to serve your country and yourself.

DI. 41: 24/5

Profile

March 1981

Vol. 24, No. 5

Staff

Director Captain V.L. Knaus, USN

Deputy Director Captain L.J. Hockman,
USA

Administration/Circulation
Technical Sergeant
W.J. Taft, Jr., USAF

Editors Staff Sergeant
Roger Allen, USA

Technical Sergeant Wilt Baker, USAF

Staff Sergeant Bill Wright, USMC

Associate Editor Chief Warrant Officer
P.M. Short, USCG

PROFILE (USPS 485-850) is published monthly October through December and February through April by the High School News Service, a Department of Defense activity at Norfolk, Va. Distribution is free directly to junior and senior high schools, colleges, universities, libraries, career centers and ROTC units requesting the service.

The purpose of this magazine is to inform young people and guidance personnel about benefits, opportunities, privileges and programs of military service.

The Secretary of the Navy has determined that the publication of this periodical is necessary in the transaction of the public business required by law of this Department. Use of funds for printing this publication was approved by the Office of Management and Budget on Dec. 2, 1980.

Unless otherwise indicated, all photographs used herein are official military photographs. Reproduction of articles and supporting photographs is authorized provided proper credit is given.

Inquiries may be directed in writing to the return address or by calling (804) 444-4871/2828 or (AUTOVON) 690-4871/2828.

Controlled circulation paid at Norfolk, Va.

Front cover photo by Wilt Baker

Back cover photo by Dan
McFerrin

Charting your future



Page 4

'Miracle' rescue in Alaska



Page 8

To be a boomer...



Page 12

A 'show' of friendship



Page 16

'Miracle' rescue in Alaska

By Day Boswell
and P.M. Short



The cruise ship Prinsendam wallows in the Gulf of Alaska shortly after U.S. and Canadian Coast Guard and Air Force units evacuated more than 500 passengers and crewmembers. No lives were lost, although the luxury liner sank eight days later. (Photo by David Cook)

Teamwork.

If there is one, single underlying theme to Coast Guard training, it is teamwork; joint action by a group of people, working together for a common goal.

Rescue work practically demands it. Admittedly, there are dramatic cases of a single person saving lives in a free-lance effort; but by and large, most lifesaving efforts are the product of years of training—and teamwork.

The rescue of more than 500 persons from the luxury liner Prinsendam last October in the Gulf of Alaska, is an excellent example of the capabilities and effectiveness of lifesaving activities resulting from a coordinated effort.

When the Prinsendam lurched to a sudden stop 360 miles east of Kodiak, because of a fire in the engine room, the SOS from her radio officer set into motion a quickly choreographed plan of action by the 17th Coast Guard District Operation Center in Juneau. Seven separate Coast Guard units, including two air stations, three cutters and two shore commands became involved in the massive operation. No less important were a civilian oil tanker that happened to be in the vicinity, four U.S. Air Force aircraft and seven aircraft from the Canadian Armed Forces.

Alerted by Prinsendam's radio calls and under instructions from the Coast Guard, the tanker Williamsburgh was the first to reach the side of the Prinsendam. By the time the fire had spread from the cruise liner's engine room to the upper decks, the captain was ordering the 360 passengers and most of the crew to abandon ship.



Survivors of the liner Prinsendam mill around the deck of the tanker Williamsburgh as they head for Yakutat, Alaska. Helicopters snatched the survivors from the sinking ship and transported them to the Williamsburgh, which happened to be in the area when the liner caught fire. (Photo by David Cook)

Capt. Cornelius Wabeke told the Coast Guard he had lost water pressure and most of his firefighting capabilities. Firefighting pumps were air-dropped and the rescuers began looking for more equipment.

In Yakutat, Alaska, a staging area was formed to support whatever disaster might lay ahead. The Coast Guard Air Stations at Kodiak and Sitka were supplying two helicopters each, while the Canadian Forces were adding two helicopters and two fixed-wing aircraft. The U.S. Air Force in Anchorage was sending another helicopter.

Medical, firefighting, and logistics personnel and equipment were

grouping with the aircraft at Yakutat.

Capt. Wabeke and a 50-man crew would stay aboard with a Coast Guardsman who was helping operate the new firefighting equipment. The ship was beginning to list, and the captain suspected that the lower decks were taking on water.

Passengers and crew jammed into the lifeboats, sometimes 80 or more in a single boat designed to carry about 50 persons. Some married couples were separated in the scramble. No one had a chance to change; many were still in pajamas and bare feet with drapes from the lounge as their blankets, or sweaters from the gift shop for wraps.

As the Coast Guard helicopters began

locating the overcrowded lifeboats in the early morning light, a storm began brewing. While the lifeboats bobbed in the waves, baskets were lowered and one by one the passengers were hoisted into the choppers. When the helicopters reached maximum weight limits, the survivors were flown either to the tanker Williamsburgh or, in some cases, to Yakutat for medical treatment.

"It seemed like an impossible task," Mrs. Lois Berk, a passenger, wrote in a letter to the Commandant of the Coast Guard. "The wind was strong, the waves were very high. At first, there was no space on the lifeboat where the basket could be lowered. Our boat was so crowded.



Huddled in a cold lifeboat, Prinsendam passengers prepare to enter a rescue basket dangled from a Coast Guard helicopter. Survivors were taken from the overcrowded lifeboats to a nearby tanker. (U.S. Coast Guard photo)

"Somehow," she went on, "after a few passes, some people in the stern of our boat were able to make room and catch and firmly place the basket in the boat. One at a time, nine persons were raised to the helicopter, and flown to the tanker Williamsburgh.

"The 'copter came back five times before I was lucky enough to be helped into the basket, hauled up, and quickly helped out of it, and taken to the tanker."

In the first hour, 150 people were airlifted to the deck of the Williamsburgh. By the end of that hour, the seas had reached 25 foot swells and the winds lashed the Gulf of Alaska at 50 knots.

For seemingly endless hours, some lifeboats continued bobbing, waiting for helicopters to appear out of the storm. "When the seas started washing over the rail into the lifeboat, the cold was almost unbearable," one passenger said.

Most people spent their waiting moments in prayer and song. Many of their small craft had run out of fuel making progress to the Williamsburgh impossible and slowing rescue work.

The Coast Guard cutter Boutwell arrived on the scene and began taking on passengers. By noon, the seas had gotten worse and there were still more than 200 people left to rescue. But, there were no casualties or serious injuries.

Radio officer Jim Pfister reported the situation from the Williamsburgh four hours into the rescue: "We have very difficult sea conditions. We have 250 survivors on board now, but more are still in the water."

Still the rescue continued, plucking one person after another from a boat or a raft. The total number on board Prinsendam was hard to determine. The sailing list of passengers was accurate, and the ship's crew numbers were reliable, but several people were not listed at all. Among them were the entertainers and the cruise staff, who managed to escape in separate lifeboats.

The seas were fighting success. By nightfall, Capt. Wabeke and his firefighters had to give up. In the truest tradition of the sea, the captain of the Dutch liner was the last to leave the ship. When he reached safety, he looked skyward and saluted with hands clasped high above his head.

The final count was made: 360 passengers, 190 crewmen, 13 cruise staff and two paramedics. Just to be sure, the Coast Guard doublechecked lifeboats and rafts marking them with paint as they went. It was confirmed—all rescued; no lives lost.

The 1,095-foot Williamsburgh changed course and headed back to Valdez with more than 450 new faces crowded between its decks and into its passageways. A few were already in Yakutat and the rest were on board the cutter Boutwell, on their way to Sitka. One week after the rescue, the \$25 million ship rolled over on its side and sank. Though it carried 188,000 gallons of fuel and oil, the only signs left were bits of debris and one life raft.

One survivor wrote of the most vivid part of the week—sighting the Coast Guard. "All I have heard for the last several days is how well the United States Coast Guard performed. Some may call the rescue effort a miracle, but it was only accomplished because of the experience and dedication of the Coast Guard," wrote Ed Brennan, president of Sears, Roebuck and Co.

Survivor Mrs. Berk knew it was more than just helicopter crews that conducted the rescue. "Another job done way beyond the ordinary was the Coast Guardsman in Juneau who answered the phone from anxious relatives of the survivors.

"My daughter phoned him every two hours for about 36 hours. He was constantly courteous, well-informed and generous with his information. The purpose of this letter is to express my extreme gratitude to the many men who participated in this miraculous rescue—saving so many, with no serious injuries. The greatest sea rescue in history."



Sporting a Coast Guard sweatshirt, a Prinsendam passenger leaves the Coast Guard cutter Boutwell in Sitka, Alaska. Many passengers fled the burning cruise ship with no clothes or baggage. (U.S. Coast Guard photo)

Charting your future

Topography, the art of graphically representing on a map the exact physical configuration of a place or a region, dates back to the American Revolution within the military. Over the years as the need for more advanced training emerged, the Defense Mapping School (DMS) was developed to provide both professionally educated and technically trained personnel to support the topographical demands of the Armed Forces.

The DMS, located at Ft. Belvoir, Va. as a component of the Defense Mapping Agency, is responsible for instruction in military mapping, charting, geodesy (MC&G), surveying, cartography, graphic arts and topographic sciences.

Twenty-one courses, ranging from the very basic to the extremely advanced, are offered for enlisted personnel, warrant officers, commissioned officers, a mixture of civilian personnel and students from foreign countries, and other federal, state and local agencies.

All courses offered come under four main department headings: Surveying, Cartography and Applied Graphic Arts, Graphic Arts, and Topographic Sciences.

Surveying is a scientific method which ascertains the precise positioning of points on the surface of the earth as well as the determination of the exact size and shape of the earth. The four fields of study that form the Department of Surveying consist of basic geodetic surveying, construction surveying, optical survey instrument repair and advanced geodetic surveying.



Marine Cpl. Lowell Arnot (r), and Army Pvt. 1 Dwayne Dancy, adjust their plumbing instrument during class field exercises. (Photo by Herbert Thweatt)



There are many facets to Geodetic Surveying. Here, 1st Lt. Roy Reider and 2nd Lt. Ann Salladay prepare a map sheet for reproduction. (Photo by Roger Allen)

Basic Geodetic Surveying concerns acquiring the fundamentals of topographic surveying and computing. Students become skillful in the use of the theodolites; the operation of manual and electronic distance measuring equipment and electronic calculators to provide military and selected civilian personnel with the skills and knowledge necessary to establish ground survey control under close supervision for assigned mapping, charting, and geodetic missions.

Students of the Construction Surveying course learn the skills necessary to enable them to provide horizontal and vertical control for military construction projects such as roads, bridges and structures.

Instruction in the Optical Survey Instrument Repair course covers

disassembly, reassembly and adjustments of optical equipment commonly found in units performing surveys in support of land combat operations.

Precise horizontal and vertical control surveys, astronomic positioning, theory of normal law of error, and gravity determination are subjects of Advanced Geodetic Surveying.

The second main area of study is contained in the Department of Cartography and Applied Graphics. This discipline encompasses mapping and charting using cartographic and photogrammetric techniques. Also included is mechanical and architectural drafting. Instruction in this department prepares the student to draft map grids, assemble aerial photographs, and compile and revise maps using aerial

photographs. Students also learn to prepare various types of construction drawings, including charts and graphs.

Five courses combine to make up the Department of Graphic Arts: basic photolithographic processes, offset printing, offset duplicating, reproduction equipment repair, and a Navy/Air Force basic lithographer course.

Subject matter for the five courses includes instruction in lithographic photography, lithographic stripping and platemaking—which are used in the reproduction of various types of printed materials, maps and charts. Other subject areas presented are offset press operation, hand composition and letterpress operation, bindery operations, micrographics reproduction and repair of reproduction equipment used in the



In raising the survey beacon, students learn the importance of teamwork. (Photo by Herbert Thweatt)

process of printing maps, charts and other related materials.

The largest of the four departments is Topographic Sciences. Departmental courses include the study of production, management, and supervision of the mapping and charting process, as well as terrain analysis, and the engineer interpretation and use of MC&G products. Instruction is keyed to the application and control of the entire topographic process.

The Defense Mapping School provides both resident training and assistance to commanders in the field in surveying and other related areas. Entire courses cannot be completed by correspondence means; however, DMS does provide the support of mobile training teams, resident training assistance and technical assistance visits to enhance educational skills in these fields.

In an effort to present the most useful and up-to-date information to its students, the school also tests new technology and equipment to evaluate its military applicability.

A continuing instructor-student-commander evaluation feedback system monitors the effectiveness of the subject

Construction drafting is one of the DMS courses approved for the Army's apprenticeship program. Pvt. 1 Bridgette Sias is shown studying a blueprint she must reproduce as a part of her studies. (Photo by Roger Allen)





Pfc. Alice Brewster receives some one-on-one instruction from one of the teachers of the Construction Surveying course. (Photo by Roger Allen)

material and teaching methods to ensure that the latest engineering and scientific techniques are employed and understood.

The dynamic training curriculum makes extensive use of closed circuit television, self-teaching programmed instruction, computer assisted instruction, and team teaching, as well as hands-on-application.

Because of the high caliber of instruction, the school has been accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools since 1975. The Commission on Education Credit of the American Council on Education has recommended that undergraduate level college credit be granted by civilian institutions.

Apprenticeship programs are available in all branches of the Army and in expanding career management fields throughout the other military services. The apprenticeship program provides the service member the opportunity to gain civilian recognition in a skilled trade. The military occupational specialties, which are included in the apprenticeship program, differ for each service and are identified in each service's regulations.

Most of the enlisted students who attend the basic courses at DMS request to do so during interviews with their local recruiter. Students attending the advanced courses do so as an advancement or job requirement, having served in the field for a while and

attained a certain skill level.

At DMS, individuals are not only trained in a career, but they also receive educational credit for furthering their knowledge at civilian colleges or universities. Many commanders make the student available to advance their skills at these outside institutions. Off-duty study is not only encouraged, but each service has programs whereby the government pays the entire bill or some portion of it, while the individual is on active duty.

Thus DMS is a school of many opportunities for anyone interested in these related fields. The challenge is there. The education is available. The incentive has to come from those who desire this type of work.

To be a boomer...

By Chuck McDonald

To pilots flying far from their home base and rapidly depleting their fuel supply, the KC-135—the Air Force's "flying gas station"—is a comforting sight. From its vast reserves, the Stratotanker supplies fuel for the pilots to finish their job and return home safely, without having to land at intermediate bases. For most fighter aircraft, direct trans-oceanic flight operations would not be possible without the Stratotanker or other airborne refueling aircraft.

The task of operating the "flying boom"—the primary method of transferring fuel from the tankers to the receiving aircraft—belongs to the air refueling specialist or "boomer." The boomer is an integral part of the KC-135 combat-ready crew and is also one of the few remaining enlisted aircrew positions in the Air Force.

In addition to operating the inflight refueling equipment, the boom operator is also designated as the aircraft's weight and balance authority. This

additional responsibility involves handling cargo and passengers that the KC-135 can, and often does carry. The boom operator is further tasked in assisting the navigator by operating the celestial sextant; a piece of equipment used to take observations of the sun, moon and stars to gather information used by the navigator in plotting the aircraft's position. Thus, the boomer is a very important member of the crew.

All of these skills are taught by instructors assigned to the Boom Operator



Sgt. Raymond Frey, a student boom operator at Castle AFB, Calif., practices tying down cargo in the KC-135 Stratotanker. Boom operators are responsible for cargo and passengers in addition to "flying the boom" during inflight refueling sessions. (Photo by Master Sgt. Hal Markuson)

Training Program conducted by the 4017th Combat Crew Training Squadron at Castle AFB, Calif. The academic program averages six weeks and is conducted in the Waring Academic Center. This four million dollar sound-proof facility contains 52 rooms in which student pilots, copilots, navigators and boom operators train.

Taking a lesson from airline training schools which use a systems approach to training, the 4017th instructor cadre uses a multi-media classroom presentation consisting of lectures, tapes and slides, videotape and equipment simulators. Air Force officials feel that the multi-media approach is the most cost-effective way of presenting maximum information to each student. The self-paced program is geared to the individual.

Approximately every 14 days a new class of potential boom operators arrives at the 4017th to begin training. Following in-processing and issue of a complete set of manuals and related operational checklists, students attend a two-day indoctrination program explaining what is expected of them during their training. This indoctrination program includes a tour of the KC-135 and is succeeded by an orientation flight. The orientation flight is conducted at the beginning of the course so that the student can experience the operation first hand to gain a feel for what the boom operator's job is really like.

After returning from the orientation flight, students settle down to the academic grind of learning about the job, assisted by instructor boom operators assigned to the 4017th. Actual training begins with the air refueling techniques class. During this class, the students learn how to operate the air refueling equipment aboard the KC-135. Students become familiar with the procedures and methods used to refuel various types of receiver aircraft. Trainees must not only be capable of refueling the Strategic Air Command's B-52 and FB-111 aircraft, but also the various fighters of the Tactical Air

Command, as well as some Navy fighter and attack aircraft. Each type of aircraft requires different refueling procedures.

Next, students attend the systems class, where they learn how fuel, hydraulic, pneumatic, electrical and various other systems aboard the KC-135 function.

After completing the systems class, students progress into the operations class, studying aircraft weight and balance, and cargo loading. They also receive instruction on basic navigation and celestial navigation, as well as emergency procedures that might be employed aboard the aircraft.

During the academic stage of training, student boom operators take 10 "rides" in the Boom Operator Task Trainer (BOPTT)—a new piece of equipment at Castle. A highly sophisticated, computerized aerial simulator, the BOPTT allows the instructor boom operator to teach students how to perform aerial refueling without leaving the ground. Students utilizing the simulator feel as though they are in the boom pod of a KC-135 at high altitude, actually refueling another aircraft.

The BOPTT consists of a special model and tracking camera system that displays an image of an aircraft approaching a KC-135 for refueling. The model in the system can be changed to simulate the various types of aircraft that the boom operator must know how to refuel. The camera tracking system is designed to give the boom operator a sense of depth, range and movement by moving toward or away from the model, in conjunction with a specially designed optical window.

Sgt. Raymond Frey, a student boom operator, said, "The BOPTT is probably one of the best things that has been added to the boom operator training program. The simulator is so realistic that you have to keep reminding yourself that you're not actually in the air, but in a small room on base.

"Another good thing about the simulator is that if you make a mistake, no damage can result, and the in-

structor can actually stop the simulator action to discuss the problem with the boom operator. The same problem can be replayed for the boom operator to make corrections, too."

Upon completion of the academic phase of training, students are assigned to Castle's 93rd Air Refueling Squadron for the actual flying portion of their training. Students make four more "flights" in the BOPTT, then join



Tech. Sgt. Bob Seay, a boom operator at Seymour Johnson AFB, N.C., takes a reading on the sun with the sextant. Shooting navigational observations is an important part of the enlisted flier's job. (Photo by Wilt Baker)

student crews consisting of pilots and navigators training in the KC-135. An instructor team is assigned to each student crew and stays with them until

the completion of their training.

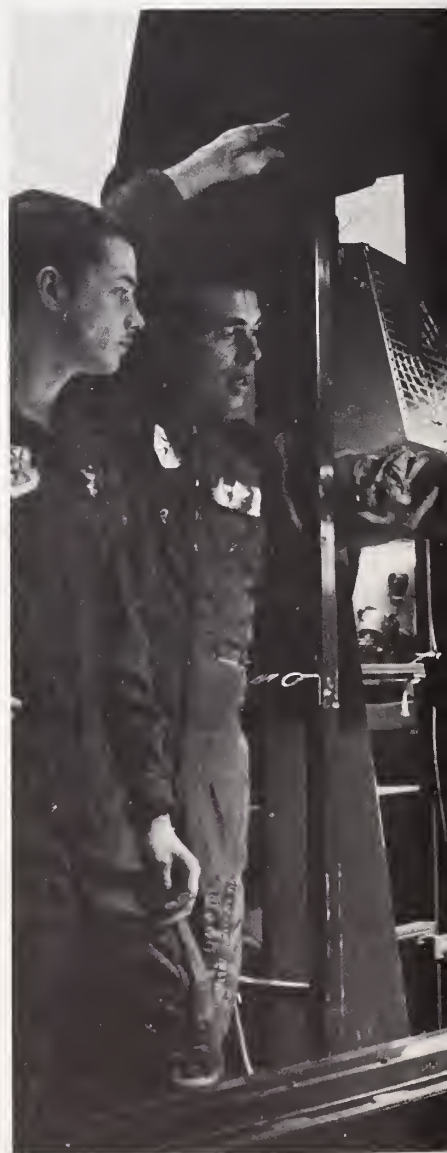
In this portion of training, the student boom operator is instructed in proper checklist procedures, the operation of

the air refueling boom and its related equipment, and in emergency procedures. When the boom operator isn't operating the boom or learning additional procedures on these flights, the student takes celestial observations for the navigator.

Chief Master Sgt. Billy G. Hall, 93rd Bombardment Wing inflight refueling superintendent, remarked, "Once a student completes boom operator training and is assigned to a permanent party squadron, he can plan on getting assigned to a crew and then becoming EWO (Emergency War Order) certified. The newly-formed crew will have to be certified as being able to accomplish



Airman 1st Class Bill Roberts, a student boom operator, lies in the boom pod of a KC-135 Stratotanker, from where he controls the aerial refueling boom. From this position in the bottom rear of the aircraft, Roberts maneuvers the boom into a receptacle on the receiving aircraft. (Photo by Master Sgt. Hal Markuson)



that unit's combat mission. After certification, a boom operator's life gets into a routine—standing alert for about a week and a half each month, flying a certain number of missions a month or continuing training.

“When a crew is pulling alert duty, that particular crew will be on base near their aircraft 24 hours a day for the duration of their alert period; usually seven days. Should the need arise, alert crews can be called on to refuel aircraft under emergency situations, or could be called upon to perform their wartime mission.

“Crews on alert are isolated from their families during the majority of the

time while they're on alert. Families are usually allowed to visit with the crews, but this depends on squadron policy and other variables. Long tours of duty away from the family are getting pretty rare these days too,” the chief commented, “but that could change depending on what happens in the world.”

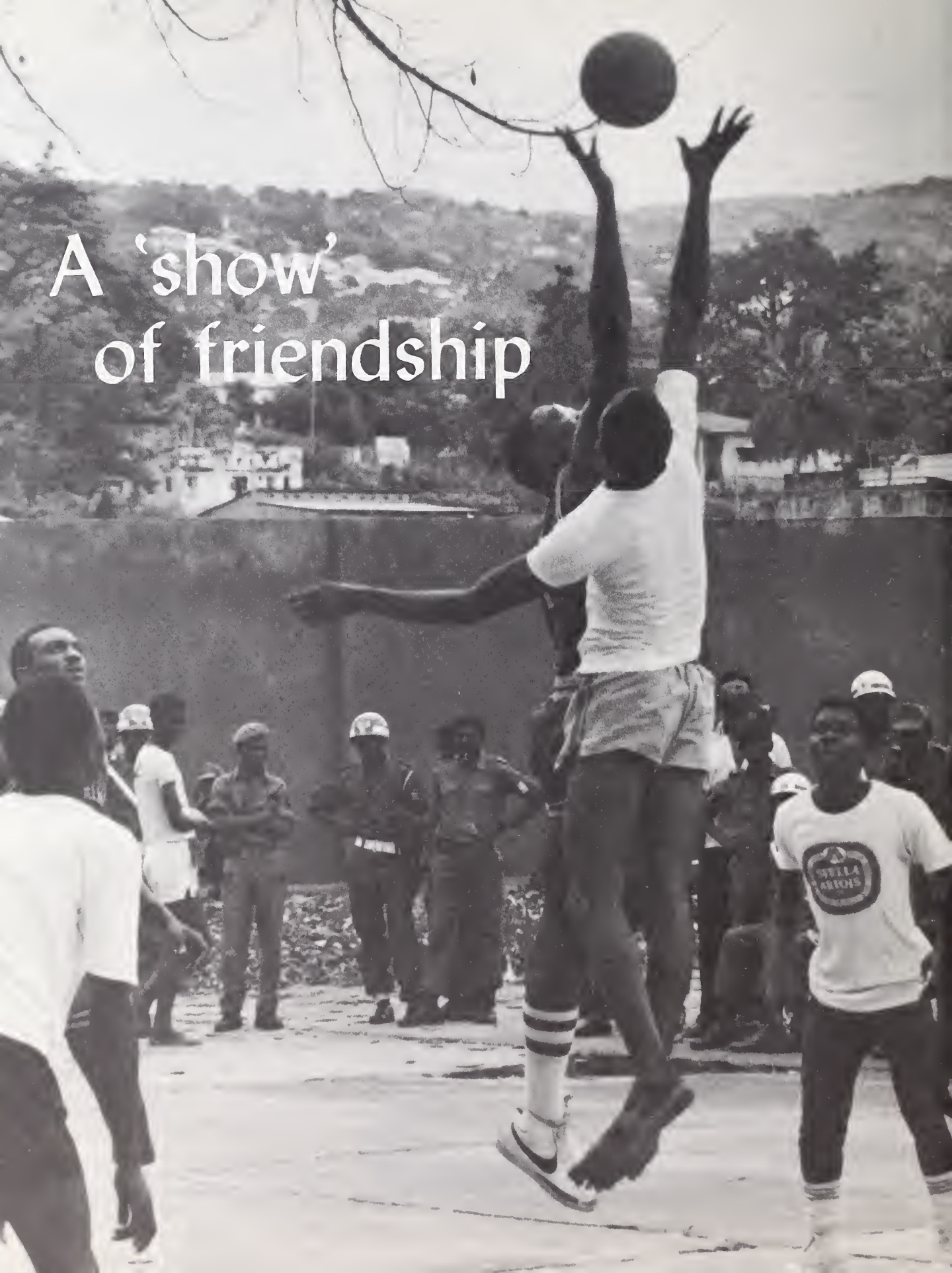
Even with the family separation caused by alert duty or extended tours of duty away from home bases, boom operators see their jobs as the best enlisted flying duty in the Air Force. They allow other Air Force fliers to do their job more efficiently by pumping fuel from their “flying gas station.”



Sgt. Raymond Frey, a student boom operator, prepares to start the auxiliary power unit aboard a KC-135 Stratotanker. The auxiliary power unit can be used to provide heat and electrical power while the aircraft is on the ground. (Photo by Master Sgt. Hal Markuson)

An instructor boom operator at the Air Force's aerial refueling specialist school explains to a student how the Boom Operator Task Trainer works.

A 'show' of friendship



**Story and photos
by Dan McFerrin**

"On Broadway" in South America, the Caribbean and Africa. A gigantic play with a cast of hundreds, culminating in the ultimate performance.

The audience was there—eager and waiting. Well-prepared performers rehearsed over and over for the opening night. And, of course, there was the plot. A most natural one, really; one almost every American could identify with. In fact, that's just what it was. A play about America, starring Americans.

"It was like being on an enormous stage, performing for crowds who never seemed to get enough," exclaimed Marine Sgt. Anthony Ballard. "The feeling of showmanship was always there. We hopped from country to country, impressing people not only with our military hardware, but with America itself. I don't think I've ever had so much to show off before," the Hartford, Conn. native continued.

What they were showing off, exactly, was the tank landing ship USS Fairfax County, its sailors and 241 Marines, a host of modern weapons, and the American way of life.

They were all well equipped for the task, complete with basketball, volleyball and soccer teams. There was food for the hungry and for post-game picnics; paint for missions and schools; toys for children; bats and balls for aspiring young athletes plus clothes for those who may not have had any.

Their mission was a simple one—"Sell America." Let them know that the United States isn't just a powerful military nation, but one of people also. Surprisingly enough, the American reputation preceded them and everywhere the Fairfax County landed, it was greeted with warmth and friendship.

"Selling America" turned out to be relatively easy for the Marines and sailors who had the privilege of performing for the peoples of the Caribbean

island of Martinique; Surinam and Brazil, South America; the African countries of Zaire, Cameroon, Togo, Nigeria, Liberia, Senegal and the Canary Islands.

Dubbed the "West African Training Cruise 80" (WATC-80), the exercise consisted of three ships: the destroyer USS Radford, the frigate USS Pharris and the Fairfax County, loaded with a reinforced company of Marines.

The Radford and Pharris preceded the Fairfax County in many ports and made various calls of their own throughout the cruise, setting up static

displays and, in general, providing a varied look at U.S. Naval capabilities.

The training cruise was really one of a kind. While most cruises are three months or longer in duration, WATC-80 took a total of 64 days. The longest time spent at sea was eight continuous days.

"It was the best cruise I've been on since I've been in the Navy," stated Petty Officer 3rd Class Michael Jones. The 20-year old native of Xenia, Ohio joined the Navy in 1978. "We were constantly stopping in a port and everywhere we went the liberty was great."



Shown with its bow-ramp down for display in Senegal, Africa, the tank landing ship USS Fairfax County is designed to off-load troops and supplies directly on shore.



An amphibious troop carrier (LVT), prepares to re-enter the ocean as a group of Togolese people look on. The Marines and sailors performed various functions of an amphibious landing to demonstrate the different capabilities of the Navy and Marine Corps team.

Designed to provide several third-world countries in West Africa with a display of U.S. Navy and Marine Corps capabilities, the Marines and sailors performed everything from amphibious assault demonstrations to community repair projects in their efforts to promote better relations and understanding with the people of these countries.

Those familiar slogans like "the Navy's not a just a job, it's an adventure," and the Marine Corps' "we're looking for a few good men" were certainly fulfilled as the fast-paced cruise provided enough adventure for a lifetime, and the Marines and sailors had more than one chance to prove just what good men they really are.

Accomplishing a number of "firsts" throughout the cruise, the Fairfax County was the first American warship



Marines set up an 81mm mortar for display in Monrovia, Liberia.

to navigate up the Congo River to Matadi, Zaire since World War II. In Lome, Togo, the Marines and sailors performed the first amphibious assault demonstration to ever be accomplished in that region—an event that signals future U.S. military presence in the area.

"It was something special to know that you are a newsmaker, doing things that people will read about later," said Sgt. Ballard. "It was exciting meeting heads of state, defense ministers and high ranking military officials at the receptions and balls. I was a volunteer bartender, so I got a lot of chances to talk to some pretty important people. If you're into meeting people, it was a chance of a lifetime."

Another first was their visit to Monrovia, Liberia, which was politically

significant in light of the long-standing relationship between Liberia and the U.S. After a successful military coup by former Liberian Army Master Sgt. Samuel Doe in April 1980, diplomatic and military relations had been severed. The Fairfax County visit was the first open military support of the new regime.

Not all of the exchanges were political, however, as in each country numerous events were scheduled for the Marines and sailors to exchange cultural differences.

"In every country we visited, they always had a basketball team," commented Sgt. Ballard. "Lots of times they didn't even have shoes, but it didn't seem to bother them at all. We played on concrete, too."

Although the basketball team fared



well against their opponents, the soccer and volleyball teams suffered a much different, but no less enjoyable fate.

"We thought we had the first team we played beat before we even got on the court," said Cpl. John Thornell, a Marine volleyball player. "They were all shorter than we were, and they didn't have shoes on. But they slaughtered us. After two games we all got together and, though they couldn't speak much English and we couldn't speak Bantu (a Zairian language), they still taught us a lot we didn't know before."

"When the games were completed, we had a picnic and they had their first American hamburgers," Thornell revealed. "At first we were just feeding the players, but before we knew it, the spectators were eating too and it turned into an all-day party. I really learned a



A hand-carved African tribal mask is presented to Marine Maj. Edward F. McCann and Navy Cmdr. John Heidt as a token of friendship by the Commandant of the Zairian Navy in Matadi, Zaire.



lot about Zaire and the African people in those few hours."

One of the most enjoyable parts about visiting another country is buying souvenirs to bring back to the United States. In all of the countries, souvenirs were much cheaper than for similar goods in America, and the American dollar stretched a long way.

"You could buy hand-carved tables, chairs, statues, chests—just about anything you could make out of wood for very little money," commented Petty Officer 3rd Class Eric Hurley. "In Zaire, the wood carvings were especially nice and you could watch while they made the carvings with primitive tools. They have no wood planes or saws; just pieces of steel, sharpened on one end and wooden mallets," Hurley continued. With those tools, the Africans



A tropical paradise adorned with a French flair for extravagance: the French-founded Caribbean island of Martinique.

handcrafted goods worth ten times their market value in the United States.

"The most ironic thing is that things we take for granted are extremely expensive in Africa," explained the 20-year old native of Sugargrove, Penn. "In most of the countries we visited, soft drinks cost anywhere from \$4 to \$7, and food was equally outrageous."

"Just meeting people whose way of life encompasses virtually nothing in common with ours is a new experience for me," related Pfc. David Wooten, a Marine Corps machine gunner. "I've never done so much traveling before, but I can see why it is such an attraction to so many people. After going someplace and seeing it first-hand for yourself and talking to the people, you can speak about that place from what you have actually seen with your own



The Atlantic Ocean silhouettes Marines from the Fairfax County as they relax on top of amphibious vehicles. The amphibious landing exercise in Togo was the first of its kind on the West African coast. Several surrounding countries have since requested similar demonstrations.

"I volunteered for this cruise and haven't regretted it," stated Sgt. Mark Mondock, a native of Detroit. "I've been in four years and I've seen the Far East, Australia, all of Europe and now South America and Africa. Even so, this cruise was unique—certainly one of a kind."

The sailors and Marines who participated in West African Training Cruise 80 agreed that it was good training, a great experience and possibly the best chance they'll ever have to see so many countries and meet so many different people in so little time.

Did the cruise enhance the relationships of the United States with the governments of the people visited? It is yet to be seen whether or not that potential has been achieved. One thing for sure has resulted from the ships' visits. The people visited have a much better viewpoint of what the U.S. sailors

eyes, not just what you hear or read about."

In Dakar, Senegal, the Marines and sailors were treated to some authentic African tribal dancing by a group of bush dancers who performed at the American Club, an establishment frequented by the U.S. Embassy staff. After the dance there was a meal of roast goat and coose-coose—an African dish much like beef stew.

A port call on the Caribbean island of Martinique provided the Marines and sailors with ample time to sightsee and enjoy the culture of another country. Known as the "Paris of the West," Martinique has a delightful combination of good weather, beautiful scenery and congenial people.



and Marines are. Conversely, the sailors and Marines have benefited greatly from the personal contact with the natives in the area. The basketball and soccer games, followed by the picnics, provided the participants with a unique insight into each other's values. The community self-help projects such as painting the schools and or-

phanages, the distribution of toys to the children, the social contact at and outside of the official functions, showed a side of the American military man that the natives may not have known.

Was the cruise worth it? To the sailor and Marine participants, the answer to that question is an unqualified and resounding, YES!

Editor's note: Sgt. McFerrin was attached to the 3rd Battalion, 6th Marines during the West African Training Cruise. He is currently assigned to the Fleet Hometown News Center in Norfolk, Va.



Being the "first to fight" means being prepared and that usually means lots of practice—even aboard a ship. The Atlantic Ocean provided a perfect impact area for the rounds of an M-60 machine gun. Marine machine gunners kept their aim sharp during firing drills such as this one.



Tour buses carried Marines and sailors throughout the island of Martinique, stopping frequently for pictures and even some swimming in the Caribbean.

Looking homeward from Senegal, Africa, the anticipation of seeing home again and the sadness of leaving a truly unique continent mingle into a feeling of contentment at having experienced a special culture of people.



West African Training Cruise

Page 16



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